

National Transportation Safety Board  
Washington, DC 20594

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Brief of Accident

Adopted 05/13/2003

LAX01FA145 File No. 13403	04/10/2001	Sierra Vista, AZ	Aircraft Reg No. N116CD	Time (Local): 18:50 MST		
Make/Model:	Cirrus Design Corp. / SR20			Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Engine Make/Model:	Teledyne Continental / IO-360-ES		Crew	1	0	0
Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed		Pass	2	0	0
Number of Engines:	1					
Operating Certificate(s):	None					
Type of Flight Operation:	Personal					
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation					
Last Depart. Point: Tucson, AZ			Condition of Light: Night/Dark			
Destination: Albuquerque, NM			Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility			
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip			Basic Weather: Instrument Conditions			
			Lowest Ceiling: 7500 Ft. AGL, Broken			
			Visibility: 10.00 SM			
			Wind Dir/Speed: 280 / 010 Kts			
			Temperature (°C): 11			
			Precip/Obscuration:			
Pilot-in-Command	Age: 54		Flight Time (Hours)			
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)			Total All Aircraft: 1567			
Private; Single-engine Land			Last 90 Days: Unk/Nr			
Instrument Ratings			Total Make/Model: 167			
None			Total Instrument Time: UnK/Nr			

The composite aircraft impacted the side of a mountain approximately 20 minutes prior to sunset after the noninstrument rated private pilot departed on a cross-country flight. The pilot obtained printed weather information via a DUATs system approximately 9 hours prior to the flight's departure. AIRMETS for mountain obscurement, moderate turbulence and moderate rime/mixed icing conditions were in effect, and included the area of the accident site. Previous weather observations from the departure airport reported snow showers located over the mountains in the vicinity of the flight's route. A witness located near the accident site, reported he could not see the base of the mountain throughout the day due to sleet, snow, rain, and wind. Nearby airport weather observations indicated VFR weather conditions; however, forecasts for the flight route indicated there was still a chance of mountain obscurement. No evidence was found that the pilot obtained updated weather information for the route of flight prior to taking off. No anomalies were noted that would have prevented normal aircraft operation.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DUSK
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - ICING CONDITIONS
5. PREFLIGHT BRIEFING SERVICE - USED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

8. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

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The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.

the pilot's inadequate weather evaluation and attempted VFR flight into IMC, which resulted in an in-flight collision with mountainous terrain. Factors in the accident included the adverse weather conditions and the dusk lighting conditions.